

# This One's For You: ISS Space Barley Beer

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Image credit: AFPBB

(PhysOrg.com) -- Critics of the Space Program can utter a sigh of relief. Finally, an innovation with a good suds head on it. A collaborative effort between the Russian Academy of Science, Okayama University and Sopporo Breweries in Japan has developed a beer that uses 100-percent barley grown on the International Space Station. The barley was grown on the ISS during a five-month period along with lettuce, wheat and peas as part of a life-sustaining long term growing project.

Sopporo Breweries acquired the space barley crop and has developed what they are calling Space Barley with a 5.5-percent alcohol content. Sopporo Breweries is not selling the 100-liters of Space Barley Beer it has created. Instead, 30 Japanese couples have been selected to taste Space Barley at a special event in Tokyo in January.

Sopporo's Junichi Ichikawa, a managing director of strategies for the brewery, says the Space Barley brand is unique insofar as its top Black Label brand uses additional ingredients like rice. Space Barley is made completely with the ISS barley. There is no commercially made beer like the Space Barley Brand. Beer is not included in the ISS menu due to the alcohol content and its potential for creating a gaseous product of digestion. Sopporo Brewery is hoping the Space Barley product could eventually become available for astronauts to sip a cool one while spending months aboard the space station.

The news of the Space Barley Beer came about when it was discovered that a cargo of miso and mackerel, seaweed soup and green tea was sent to the International Space Station recently to sustain astronauts. According to a Russian cosmonaut, potatoes can be eventually grown on the ISS. He is quoted as saying, "potatoes can be grown for food, not for vodka production."

Sopporo Breweries is one of the oldest beer producers world-wide. It began in 1876 under a different name and under the direction of Seiei Nakagawa who studied beer making in Germany. The first beer label, Sopporo Lager reflects the Pioneer's symbol, the Northern Star.

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